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THE NEWS LETTER

OF THE COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

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What's a Humane Letter?

By JOHN PALMER GAVIT

(Editor's Note: This answer to the question proposed in its title, by a Doctor of Humane Letters, appeared in the Dartmouth Alumni Magazine, and is reprinted here in part, with the approval of author and editors.)

Ever since I was a little boy, I have been writing; the impulse to do it seems irresistible and incurable; no doubt I shall continue an addict until the end, as Whitman says, "garrulous to the very last." And to that "very last" I shall be wondering as I wonder now, what it is that I am doing, with these arbitrary marks on paper. Right now, stringing them along in groups, here in Florida, in hope of making something happen in other fellows' minds a thousand miles and more from here. For twenty-five years I have been trying to put together an essay, under the caption, "The Magic of Writing"; I find the task increasingly baffling. For nothing short of magic it is; instead of Doctor of Humane Letters I might better have been granted the "M. A."—Magician's Apprentice—for I am still trying to figure out the real nature of my trade . . . like the psychologist having some slight aptitude for processes and techniques but completely in the dark as to the essential nature of the substance around whose edges he bushwhacks gropingly.

I hear a lot of precious twaddle from writers and professors of English about "self-expression," "style" and whatnot else of the abracadabra of our cult; but it leaves me cold —when it doesn't make me laugh. "Self-expression"? To whom? "Style"? What does that mean? The more "style" you have the more it interferes with the thing you are trying to do. The more peculiar and "individual" it is, the more you are obstructing with your own posturing self your ostensible purpose of getting your Idea over to the Other Fellow—which is the only excuse for writing; or talking, or painting, or sculpturing, for that matter.

But even that statement is fallacious; for you are not trying to get your Idea over. You can't do it, unless the Other Fellow already has it, latent and unrealized perhaps, but there in all its elements. In a very real sense, you cannot tell anybody anything that he doesn't already know. In other words, you can work only with and upon the material of his experience. Your writing, your procession and arrangement of words—and above all they must be words meaningful to him—must incite him to scrabble about in his memory for scraps

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Post-War English

(Editor's note: These two contributions continue a series from college administrators, on College English after the war.)

From the President of Kenyon College

Freshman English And the Peace

The educational discussions of Army and Navy officers and of civilians recently commissioned by the services have employed over and over again a vulgar word. The word is as hypocritical as an "Italian type" villa in the suburbs; it is "cultural background".

"Along with this physics and mathematics," say the educational planners, "the trainees ought to get a little bit of cultural background". The belief is by no means confined to the old soldiers and sailors or even the new soldiers and sailors. Prexies and professors drop the phrase casually, as casually as a cussing old Irishman crosses himself when he mentions the Virgin Mary.

The business at hand in Washington is the training of young officers, not their education, but their training, either to the point where they can be relied upon to give orders on deck or in the field, or to the point where they can be entrusted to use complex engines of war. "Cultural background" is thought to be a steadier, just as regular atendance at church in peace time provides a kind of guarantee of respectability. It is thought also to provide some relief to the tired brain of a technical student. An engineer, commenting on the severe course for Weather Officers in the Air Corps, said, "Hadn't you better throw in a little history of music?"

The engineer and the military men are correct in these views. To read a few novels or plays or to remember a little music may save the nerves of intelligent men under stress and may, indeed, distract them from more dangerous pleasures.

The wickedness lies not at all in the course of studies designed by the military men. These, on the whole, are excellent for their purpose, having but one end, to train soldiers. Our enemies won't wait while the Army and Navy add education to the training. The wickedness lies in the mealy-mouthed notion of the arts reflected in the suburbanite word "cultural background". Who taught the prexies, the professors, the colonels and the lieutenant commanders that they should think of cultural background instead of one good play or one good sonata?

(Continued on Page 3)

From the President of University of Michigan

Dear Editor:

I am not really competent to reply professionally to your request of April 17, but I am willing to make a fleeting observation in this connection.

I assume that the teaching of English in our colleges has had a double purpose—the mastery of our language as a tool for communicating ideas in spoken or written form and the development of interest in and understanding of a great literature. The war is sharpening and pointing up the great need for the first of these purposes, and the post war world will emphasize both but particularly the latter. Literature lives in proportion as it reproduces life as it has been lived. In a sense, it is the distillate of man's experience set down in some appealing form. The teaching of literature as form and structure is often quite sterile and unsatisfying. Most students are challenged by ideas rather than by structure.

In a world of rapidly shifting ideas and changes of emphasis, the English teacher has a great function because his subject matter ranges so widely and takes hold at so many points.

It would seem to me, therefore, that the field of literature and expression will have a tremendous opportunity in the years following the war and that teachers in this discipline can have an importance on our campuses all out of proportion to their numbers. To do this they must be vital, imaginative and enthusiastic — not routineers and "treadmillers"—and they must recognize the fact that they deal with living concerns and not embalmed ideas and attitudes crystalized into fossil forms.

University of Wisconsin.
—C. A. Dykstra,

Earlier contributions to this series of letters, appearing in March and April, were from Dean Addison Hibbard, Northwestern University; President Ray Lyman Wilbur and Dean John W. Dodds, Stanford University; President Carter Davidson, Knox College; Chairman C. E. Satterfield and the English Staff of Kent State University, Ohio. Others will follow.

A United Front

Many of us, July 1 or thereafter, will be increasingly occupied in teaching English to young men in uniform. Although their course of studies may exclude subjects which we consider essential to liberal education, Army and Navy authorities do recognize the importance of training in expression and of some understanding of American life and ideals through the study of history and literature. True, some of us who already have had the privilege of teaching specialized units know that the young men may be inclined to regard English as a frill. Worse than that, some of us may be in danger of considering their hours with us as only a merciful provision of the armed forces to keep us employed. Such an attitude will inevitably defeat the objectives of the Army and the Navy and, perhaps, in the long run, destroy our own sense of the validity of what we do.

The statements of Secretary Knox, Secretary Stimson and Admiral Leahy, printed in the September and October issues of the "News Letter", should persuade us that we really have no excuse for such an attitude. If they are not sufficient, our own experience with the appalling slovenliness of expression which disfigures the writing of many college seniors ought to convince us that our part in the training of the future officers assigned to us is essential. They will be expected to communicate facts with greater clarity than we have been used to in most undergraduate papers on literature, and they will often be forced to write without benefit of suggested revisions. If we are to prepare them adequately for their job, surely we must go at ours with a seriousness and confidence equal to its importance.

Should we stop there, however, we might lose our fight; we could not stand against the combined weight of mathematics and the other sciences, with their heavy armor of practicality. And we might, at worst, find even History attacking us in a flank movement, creating the assumption that, since we were required to use its materials, we had nothing worth-while of our own. The young men in training might not be aware that such an intangible conflict was going on in their minds, but they would quickly sense its results and side with the winners.

Such an undesirable situation could be avoided fairly easily, I believe, if, before any such battle were joined, we could bring our potential antagonists over to our side. Since my figure of speech is exaggerated, as well as a trifle shopworn, and no very serious conflict between departments exists in most

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THE NEWS LETTER

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EDITORIAL

Professor Robert T. Fitzhugh of the University of Maryland whose name flies at the masthead of this little craft, is now a lieutenant in the navy and has other duties to perform in other places remote from here so that he must become inactive so far as CEA is concerned for the duration. Congratulations to Lieutenant Fitzhugh, and, incidentally, to the United States Navy.

The Fitzhugh pennant is lowered and stowed for the duration and in its place flies the burgee of John Abbot Clark of Michigan State College, who will serve as assistant editor for the balance of the current year.

Dodd, Mead & Co. anonunce the offer of a new intercollegiate fellowship open to any man or woman student in an American college or university who wishes to become a professional author. The fellowship is designed to give undergraduates an opportunity to take advantage of faculty advice and instruction while planning and writing a novel and to enable them to work toward the completion of the book for one year after graduation. The fellowship is awarded on the basis of promise shown, and does not require a completed manuscript. The amount of the award is $1200 and further information may be secured by writing to the donors. The first awards of this fellowship have been made to Maureen Daly of Rosary College and to Barbara Bently of Pomona College.

An inquiry into the prevailing methods of teaching written composition in American colleges, under a generous grant from the Carnegie Foundation, conducted by your secretary, was completed nearly six years ago. Several pamphlets containing findings of the inquiry were published, and the fact that they are still being mailed out in response to scattered requests indicates that they have not lost their timeliness. A quantity of the final pamphlet summarizing all findings still remains in stock, and it seems advisable that these should be finally distributed and thus better carry out the purposes of the grant. This editorial note will serve to explain why members of CEA are receiving shortly a pamphlet sent out from the Secretary's office.

A magazine containing practical advice on how to write novels, short stories, articles and verses, and how to market them, periodically endeavors to extend its circulation among college English teachers. These appealing letters from its editor-in-chief always give us pleasure. Some time ago we called attention to one of them which contained more than a dozen errors in spelling, grammar, or good taste. Another has just arrived, and copies are doubtless in the hands of most of our members on a letterhead which describes the publication as the "Leading, Largest, and Foremost Writers' Magazine". In a forecast of the contents of future issues, we are told that there will be an outline of a novel of the great West which will tell of the battle of Little Big Horn and of Kit Carson and of "Uncle Sam's camel brigade whose wild progenitors still roam our desserts". Surely anyone who learns to write from these patterns will acquire originality, if nothing else.

Gleaned From the Mail

Dear Editor:

I am enclosing payment for Chap Books I, II, III and IV published by the College English Association. I was delighted with John Erskine's "What Should Teachers of English Teach?".

As a high school teacher may I say that most of my colleagues are as disturbed over the status of English teaching today as are the college teachers. We believe that unless we set our house in order immediately, English is going to be tossed out of the secondary curriculum. I have heard administrators in St. Louis state that "The Odyssey" and "Julius Caesar" are the chief causes of the large withdrawal from the first year of high school! That seems to be a strong indictment of those English teachers who fail to see their function as teachers of humane arts.

I was so much in accord with the points made by Mr. Erskine in his address that I felt you would not mind an expression from one who toils in that vast wilderness of ignorance, the secondary school.

Very truly yours

(We print this letter without signature, since there is not time to secure permission before going to press. —Ed.)

Dear Editor:

Please regard this as a "yea verily" to John Erskine's brilliant broadside. Some teachers at Ohio Wesleyan had kept saying what they wanted to do with an English Reading Room: so last fall a store room in the library was reclaimed and made to blossom as the rose. Fine carpets were laid, draperies were hung by a designer, and chairs, floor-lamps, tables, and bookcases added. Then in the room, which was accessible only through the stacks of the library, about twelve hundred volumes were placed. They include texts of all the monuments from "Beowulf" to Thomas Hardy, and a few things like Edwin Arlington Robinson's Arthurian narratives. In addition, there are most of the great studies, like those of Klaeber, Skeats, Root, Manly, Kittredge, Hanford, Tillyard, and Lowes, as well as related books on painting and architecture, such as Duveen's "Elizabethan Interiors".

The enterprise is now flourishing in quiet vigor, the world outside notwithstanding. Many of the boys who are reading most in the room look as if they may be adequate soldiers next year. Some of them are there, oriented, nearly every time we pass the doors.

Of course, the teachers are the main reasons for the success of the room. It would not run on its own power any more than would a fine organ. The teachers assign, urge, approve, and, of course, shed a just proportion of bitter tears over the work of the students.

One of the teachers — Robert Marshall, a man who communicates the essence of the humanities and has made some literature himself— had thirty students in a survey course during the first semester of this year. At least twenty-four of them read, among other things, "Troilus and Crisseyde", "Le Morte Darthur", Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Histories of the Kings of Britain", Tottel's "Miscellany", and "Tamburlaine"; and they matched these with Robinson's "Tristram" and translations of the "Chanson de Roland", the "Nibelungenlied" and the "Decameron". They seemed gratified over their routine experience, which will confirm us in our belief that the world can still move for the same reasons that it always could.

—Deckard Ritter,
Ohio Wesleyan.

Dear Editor:

The attached item is one term-paper-reader's versified (not poetical!) conception of the originality, significance, unity, emphasis and coherence of the general run of the term papers now again about to be dumped in our laps. The blithe neglect of quotation marks, of sources, of titles and of spellings are all incorporated within the "sonnet" which in itself, of course, is no sonnet. I hope the satirical intention is not so lost in its own obscurity as to be completely unintelligible to your readers. If it seems so to be— let your wastebasket be your filing cabinet!

—W. L. Payne,
College of the City of New York.

TERM PAPER BY GURTZ

(In sonnet form with footnotes)

Dedicated to William Lytton Payne who has read too many.

In Forty-three at the break of day
I take up my pen to have my say:
When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past
Earth has not anything to show more fair
Than Cortez upon a peak in Darien,
Or Browning riding hard to Dix
To his little lowly hermitage
Down in a dale "hard by the farthest side'.[1]
With never a bow and scarcely a shiver
I snatch me a quill from out its quiver—
A paper is due, —lay on B. Gurtz
I'll dig and I'll note, I'll even quote.
Late and soon, getting and spending'—and now I'm ending.

[1] As quoted in H. Spencer's 'Fairy Queen'.
[2] An illusion to Wordsworth's sonnet.

The following documents recently received in the editorial mail should be of especial interest to many members:

North Carolina English Teacher, Vol. I, No .1 (April, 1943). A miniature periodical, eight pages, 4″x6″; containing news and gossip of interest to school and college teachers of English in the tarheel state, and signed editorials on educational matters. Letters should be addressed to E. H. Hartsell, Chapel Hill, N. C.

College English Composition Courses: An Inventory. The results of an inquiry conducted by members of the Department of English Composition at Wellesley College. Five mimeographed pages summarizing procedures followed at various institutions of higher learning. Sixty-two had replied to a questionaire sent out by a committee of which Miss Elizabeth Manwaring is chairman.

A.A.F. Basic Communication. An outline or syllabus, or complete program of instruction for service men assigned to University of Wichita. Six multigraphed pages containing assignments for each week; instructions to teachers as well as students, and a glossary for use in correcting work in composition.

(This is the result of devoted labor by our recently chosen Director Professor Ross Taylor, now leaving his classroom to report for service with the Anti-aircraft Artillery. The best wishes of his colleagues in CEA surround him. —Ed.)

A Concise Bibliography of the Complete Works of Richard Henry (Hengist) Horne (1802-1884) by Eri J. Shumaker, Asso. Professor of English, Denison Univ. 14 pages and cover; paper-bound. 50 cents

Freshman English And the Peace

(Continued from Page One)

I do not think the fault lies primarily with the lecturers to upperclass elective courses in the novel or the modern drama. By the time a chemistry major is led by his faculty adviser to sign up for a recreational course in interesting and not-too-serious books he is already committed to the Hollywood-advertising agency view of cultural background. Perhaps the student lost his chance to read literature as an honest man—to read with the same honesty with which he studies his chemistry—when as a high-school boy he was told about culture and cultural background. Perhaps he was never taught literature at all. Perhaps he never had the chance to look hard at one small poem in order to find what it says and to apprehend it. Perhaps no one of his school or college teachers ever conveyed to him the idea that letters, painting, music, history and philosophy, like chemistry, must be understood in little before treated in the large. You cannot call the young man a hypocrite, for he has no way of knowing that the words and ideas about the arts which, perhaps inadvertently, his teachers put into his head, are hypocritical.

Any English teacher worth his salt knows where to start showing a student the nature of literature. It is early. School courses in writing and reading and Freshman courses in reading and writing are the time. A boy who reads one good poem well, and proceeds from that great accomplishment very slowly to read with imaginative perception and to write accurately about what he has read may escape the fallacy that his reading is "background". Background indeed! It is a way to think. More, it is a way to school his feelings as well as his thoughts; it is a way to instruct the soul in loyalty, joy, love, and the nature of perfidy.

There are so many enormous threats to the peace of the world that one might plausibly argue that any one of a score of them constitutes the greatest danger to our life as a nation and civilization. One of these, perhaps the greatest, is the possibility, nay, the probability, that when the war and the necessity for technical training for technical warfare cease the critical studies will remain in popular esteem nothing but cultural background.

What are the arts if they are not the expression of man's honesty with himself or his lack of it? Medicine will be important when we try to cope with the post-war plagues of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas; nutrition, agriculture, engineering and transport will be important. But for the peace of the world these intellectual enterprises will not approach in importance one other thing: the degree to which people know how to be honest wtih themselves.

English studies are ethical, their end being the accurate account of human nature. To know something internal about men and women is to acquire two things: the basis on which one may judge the values in all the elaborate ramifications of right and wrong, ugly and beautiful; and the disposition to regard all events of whatever kind in terms of man and his good.

The peace will be won only by the sustained effort of hundreds of thousands of people who try to judge the social, economic, political and military problems of the nations in terms of man and his good. World federations and social insurance plans wil prove peculiarly inconsequential in the hands of people who regard the most accurate and compelling knowledge men possess as "cultural background".

Much English teaching in school and college is devoted altogether to revealing the nature of man. For the student the quest begins with small manifestations. A perennial obstacle to our use of the arts lies in the pleasures available in the pseudo-arts. Unfortunately the Hollywood version of a good play is pleasing to the insensitive person unaware that he is seeing one-tenth or less of the real statement of the original and, perhaps, an enormous falsehood, not only in the ending, but throughout the film. Fortunately, however, young unspoiled minds prefer tough and substantial ideas to flimsy ones, and in school and freshman English the teacher has a chance to show a student how to be honest in subtle matters as well as obvious ones and how to look for the elaborate and implied ideas as well as the simple and measurable ones.

—Gordon Keith Chalmers.

Chaucer in War Time: A Defence

In a brief article by Mr. Harry Hopkins, entitled "You Will Be Mobilized", which appeared in The Reader's Digest for February 1943, and The American Magazine for December 1942, occurs a sentence that, if I interpret Mr. Hopkins aright, is a bit disconcerting and annoying to the teacher or connoisseur of literature. This is the sentence:

"I see no reason for *wasting time* on *what today are non-essentials*, such as *Chaucer* and *Latin*." (The *italics* are mine.)

My first reaction was to let this statement pass as emanating from one whose zeal of the moment outran his discretion. As several of my students, however, strongly resented its implication—students do read The Reader's Digest—I have become more and more irritated by its assumptions. I of course take it that "President Roosevelt's right-hand man"—one wonders if the editors do not mean "handy" man—was declaring for a moratorium on the study of literature and language for the duration. Not being a classical scholar, I shall naturally omit all further reference to Latin in this indictment, but I must set forth the reasons, or perhaps prejudices, that provoke my resentment at his immediately dropping the study of Chaucer and other abidingly famous creators of great literature from the curiculum of the soldier's training course, even tho the time for such training is limited. My objection to this arrogant dictum is threefold. First, it seems that our boys—and I have two of them—in the armed services should have a firsthand, vivid, personalized conception of the actual goals for which we are fighting if they are to serve the cause of civilization most efficiently. Where can they better get this dynamic conception than from the visions and ideals of a fuller day that have haunted and prompted the impassioned utterances of the sages and poets from the days of Homer and Plato to those of Rupert Brooke and H. G. Wells? Isaiah, Socrates, Virgil, Horace, Servetus, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Lowell, Browning, and an innumerable host of others—each has given artistic and therefore permanent embodiment to the dreams of humanity for a better world. 'Tis for the realization and preservation of these dreams that the United Nations are fighting. To the creative author alone is granted the mystic power of quickening these dreams into constructive and enduring action. May our boys over there be saturated with and animated by such dreams!

Secondly, how better can we sustain the morale of these boys in the inevitable hours of discouragement and dejection at the front than by previously undergirding it by an intimate acquaintanceship with and reliance upon the courageous, vitalizing overflow of soul of these great prophets of divinity? The literary classics of the centuries will, far better than any other stimulus, upon recall renew their high courage and restore their mental poise. Such inspiring appeals as those of Milton's opening books of "Paradise Lost", or Wordsworth's "It Is Not to Be Thought Of", or Lowell's "Present Crisis", or "Commemoration Ode", or Tennyson's "Ulysses", or Browning's "Epilogue to Asolando", or Rupert Brooke's "Now God Be Thanked", etc. arising spontaneously out of the chamber of memory cannot fail to regird the discouraged to "up and at it again" —this time as never before.

Thirdly, when the foundations and terms of a lasting because an honorable, a righteous peace are being formulated by the soldier-citizen or statesman of tomorrow, how necessary that the great truths and ideals found in great literature blaze the trail and prepare the way. Knowing man's ideal, which in the last analysis is his real, nature from man's truest, most comprehensive interpreter, the creative artist, the peacemaker in that glad day of a United Nations' victory, animated by such an ideal, will give his enlightened best, his all for an abiding treaty founded on justice.

Consequently, while there are technical courses that the prospective fighter must pursue in preparation for this supreme struggle, are there not other so-called but miscalled impractical courses that upon deeper reflection are seen to be equally practical for the immediate task?

—Milton Simpson,
Kalamazoo College.

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What's a Humane Letter?

(Continued from Page 1)

from his experience, and newly arrange them into a pattern as nearly as possible like the one in your mind. If his experience is in no respect like yours, you have no material to work upon and can tell him nothing. That is why the farmer said upon seeing the dromedary, "They ain't no such animal!" Not a fraction of the beast existed in his mental experience—he couldn't even imagine him, though there before his eyes.

So, in human—or, let us call it humane—communication, it is more important for the writer to know and write in the vocabulary and the terms of the reader's experience than in those of his own. As Henry Clay Trumbull said of teaching, unless something is learned, nothing is taught. The success of the writer and this ability as such, is measurable absolutely so far as concerns his communicating anything, by the degree in which the reader "gets" him. A veteran missionary told me of a group of Swedish Christians convinced that the Second Coming of Christ would be deferred until every man, woman and child in the world was informed of its approach. A delegation of them came through the Chinese village where this missionary lived, up and down every street and alley, punctiliously declaiming, "Christ is coming! Christ is coming!" . . . in Swedish! Informing their politely amazed auditors of — nothing whatever; they heard only meaningless funny noises.

Lots of writing is like that; the authors, literary snobs, proudly displaying their vocabularies, juggling their ostentatiously queer idiosyncracies of construction alias 'style,' do their stuff complacently, imagining that they are imparting something momentous momentously; but their projectiles are duds. As Frank Tinney used to say of his piccolo-playing, "I blow it so sweetly; and it comes out so rotten!" The proof of any pudding is not in the self-conscious technique of the cook, but in the enjoyment and benefit of the eating.

Upon a certain day in November, 1863, one Edward Everett spoke for more than three hours; one Abraham Lincoln spoke for two-and-a-half minutes. You would have difficulty in finding the text of Everett's speech; every school child knows by heart what Lincoln said; his Gettysburg address is immortal. Why I do not know. Simplicity, brevity—yes; but it is something more than that. Tell me what it is about Keats, about the Twenty-third Psalm, about—any other of the writings with marks on paper that grip the hearts of men—that makes all the difference. It's magic, I tell you.

I do not know what it is, though all my life I have been searching for it, as one with a microscope might search for the secret of the beauty of a flower, with a telescope for the poignant charm of a landscape, with a scalpel dissecting for the secret of a great man's greatness.

One thing I have found out; that is that the art of it abides not in the tools, the vocabulary, the etymology and syntax, important though they be; but in the writer's understanding of and sympathy with the reader, with him to whom he speaks. By sheer magic, effortless as the movement of a reciprocating engine—better still as the song of a meadowlark—he must enter into and command the spirit of his auditor, compelling him to attune his resources of mind and memory and imagination in response. St. Paul said it: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not sympathy, understanding . . . sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

Burned Books

The Council on Books in Wartime has issued a list of books entitled "Books like these were burned and banned by the Nazis." This list includes not only two of the American authors whose books were burned on May 10, 1933; Upton Sinclair and Sholem Asch, but also many of the authors whose works have since been banned as harmful to Nazi philosophy. The list includes such titles as Franz Boas' "Mind of Primitive Man", Ernest Hemingway's "Farewell to Arms" and Sinclair Lewis' "Main Street."

This book list has been prepared by the Library Committee of the Council on Books in Wartime, of which Jennie M. Flexner, Readers' Adviser of the New York Public Library, is chairman. The list is mimeographed and may be obtained free of charge, by writing to the Council on Books in Wartime, 400 Madison Avenue, New York. The Committee used the basic lists and the experience of Dr. Alfred Kantorowicz as an aid in the preparation of the final list. Dr. Kantorowicz, who was general secretary of the libraries of Burned Books in London and in Paris, believes that all interested in books and the diffusion of knowledge should make a special point of celebrating this Nazi gesture. He says: "It goes without saying that the temporary suppression or destruction of artistic and scientific achievement does not in any way mean its permanent loss or that of the ideas and lessons which it contains. On the contrary, suppression, confiscation, destruction and banning have made these books the essential, imperishable possession of all those who seek to preserve the great heritage of the past and the achievements of the present."

As part of the observance, the New York Public Library at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street lowered its flag to half-mast for an hour at noon on May 10th. The branch libraries of the New York Public Library system marked the day by exhibitions of the books banned and burned and of "Books by Americans which the Nazis would burn because they stand for the dignity of the individual, brotherhood of man and the things of the spirit." These books include Tom Paine's "Common Sense," Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," Abraham Lincoln's adresses, Carl Sandburg's poems, and Wendell Willkie's "One World".

What books would you add to the list?

Strictly Personal

For the information of many new members (who are urged to contribute to the columns of this informal periodical as well as to read them) the principles governing our editorial behavior are here set forth.

1. Ideas, suggestions, criticisms, protests, directly or indirectly related to college English teaching, sent in by members who hope or believe that they will be of interest to other members, make up the contents of these columns.

2. Except in cases of extreme provocation, no articles longer than 1,000 words are accepted. The submitting of a longer article implies the author's permission to the editor to "cut", unless such permission is denied in an accompanying letter.

3. The editors and the CEA assume no responsibility for opinions expressed, and welcome widely divergent attitudes toward any subject related to English teaching. They desire that these columns shall present a fair cross-section of prejudices, opinions, and even writing skill within our association.

4. Because of limited space, the editors prefer not to reprint matter which has appeared in print elsewhere, but members will be informed of where it may be found. Exceptions to this rule must occasionally be made.

5. Advertising is strictly limited in space and subject-matter. No advertiser is allowed more than four inches of space, one column wide, in any issue[1]. His announcements have news value of especial significance, and are recommended to the attention of all members. This paper is not dependent upon income from advertising; but it has been greatly aided by the continuing friendly cooperation of its advertising friends.

6. Subscriptions are not solicited outside the CEA membership, although a special rate has been granted to libraries. College English teachers who are not members occasionally receive free copies in the hope that they may thus be led to join the association. Members who have contributed to any issue may have extra copies free of charge for the asking, while the edition lasts. "Chap Books" and other printed matter sent out occasionally with the "News Letter" go only to members without charge.

[1] Exception is made in this issue, in the case of the announcement of a book published for the CEA by the Ronald Press.

Can Your Students Write A Novel?

The Dodd, Mead Intercollegiate Fellowship offers to students who can write a novel the opportunity to compete for a $1200 award, to be paid as an advance against future royalties while the novel is being written. Two awards have already been given: to Maureen Daly of Rosary College for her novel "Seventeenth Summer," published in April 1942 and now in its 13th printing, and to Barbara Bentley of Pomona College for "Hedge Against the Sun" to be published next Fall. A new competition is now open for 1943-1944. Write for brochure to

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Ulysses Up-to-date

The text of this academic sermon or literary lecturette is a line from a famous poem by Alfred Tennyson. That stimulating Englishman, in his vigorous piece "Ulysses", strikes a keynote with ringing words of challenge which seem appropriate for our own time: "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." This passage gives, with dramatic brevity, the complete story of a famous Grecian hero. Ulysses had been all over the known world of his day, had enjoyed the spirit of a great adventure, had drunk delight of battle with his peers, had suffered greatly, had won success, had gained the honors of a seasoned leader, and had become, as he put it, a part of all that he had met. Returning home, he was not satisfied to enjoy a life of gentle ease. He did not wish to grow old in government or even by his own fireside, but he heard the call of the gods and felt the lure of the future:

"Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world . . . .
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

By application, we may get here a living commentary on the college generation which a four-years course has come to recognize:

A freshman must strive;
A sophomore must seek;
A junior must find;
A senior must not yield.

The freshman must strive. Even the most sophisticated member of the senior class or the most ambitious candidate for entrance into Phi Beta Kappa will confess the truth of that statement. The freshman must have desire for learning, for educational accomplishments, for self-improvement as the weeks go by, and the shell breaks, letting his wings flap freely. He must sprout ambition—for physical betterment, for mental attainment, for social advancement, and for growth of soul. He will rarely be fully hatched when June rolls around and his first college year is over; but he has been exposed for many months to observation, and rational change, and what we call advice, and he must attempt to stay in the marching column while others drop behind from chafing shoes and corns and bleeding feet on the paths of culture. Verily, the freshman must strive.

The sophomore must seek. The second year in college should be more than a continuation of the two semesters that have gone before. It should be full of rich experience of its own—a brand new start to progress, a finer house on a sunny street; and it should furnish great incentive for the coming race. The sophomore must acquire enough sense to understand what Holmes meant in "The Chambered Nautilus" when he referred to "each new temple, nobler than the last". He must seek to make distinctions, to detect the various relationships of life, to master some of the secrets of language and science and philosophy. The sophomore must seek to know the difference between his present self and his self as a freshman. When he finds that out, he is ready to move into the moon at third quarter, and write junior after his name. Verily, a sophomore must be a seeker after truth.

The junior must find. If he does not, as he heads himself for milestone number three, he will slip and slide and lose his way. What a wonderful chance for a modern nursery rhyme:

He may fall down,
And break his crown,
And never wear a cap and gown!

He must find something. He must now make discoveries and make them fast. He must at least find one of the keys to the treasure-chest, and one of the keys to the powder-house; for if he cannot produce the smallest mental explosion, he is in his place by false pretence—has either slipped unnoticed through the pedagogical gate or has stuffed the examination ballot box, and is an undesirable campus alien, who deserves deportation. Verily, the junior must find.

The senior must stand the final test of college education. He must not yield. Surely all college graduates realize the significant truth of this declaration. Many students fall by the wayside. Some faint because of mathematical pains; some become anemic because they cannot digest the milk of biological science; and others die of thirst when dry discussions scorch the walls of the department of history, or sociology, or English. The mortality rate of many of our American colleges during the last ten years has been too high. The depression and the impending war may have been partly to blame. The shifting conditions of college standards may have been slightly responsible. Individual character, however, with all of its background in family training and culture, has had more to do with the case. The senior, then, if we must have a definition (and this is an age of definitions, and definite definitions at that)—a real senior is a student who did not yield.

Seniors are not merely sophomores plus juniors, and therefore seniors—the composite of the four-years educational course, a finished product by virtue of serving time, or of gaining good grades as a building is erected piece by piece, or as children pile blocks upon a floor. No, it cannot be; it never will be in a thousand years. They become candidates for graduation only because, along the track from freshman-land to senior-paradise, they strove, and sought, and found, and did not yield.

Tennyson was right. Ulysses knew what he was talking about. I think you will agree with me in the same conclusion. It is a big principle that I have thus figuratively tried to emphasize; and the lesson is not only for those who are about to become alumni.

Scholastic achievement deserves congratulation. So do courage and ambition and the spirit of adventure in the educational field. As hardy buccaneers, when it might have been easier to sail the Indian Ocean, certain individuals brave four wintry seas to gain the place all their fellow students ought to covet. Who, better than they, should firmly believe and truly know, both from looking back and from spying out the sun-crowned hills ahead, that it is not in vain "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield"?

—William Eben Schultz,
Illinois Wesleyan University.

A United Fromt

(Continued from Page 1)

institutions, that should not be too difficult. Could we not persuade all departments about to be engaged in teaching military and naval units that instructors in English have not the sole responsibility for clear and forceful expression? that insofar as any teacher in any course permits the use of poor English by his students, he is failing in his duty? that insistence upon good English is even more necessary in the 'practical' subject matter with which the young officer will deal in service than it is in the English classroom?

Some departments of English have attempted before now to create such a unified front in their institutions, a few of them with success. All of us will have to make the effort sooner or later if we are to eradicate from the undergraduate mind the conception of good English as something applicable only to themes or departmental papers. Where could we make a better start than with a group of teachers devoted to a common purpose beyond any merely departmental aims? The academic head of at least one technical unit—he is a mathematician — has insisted on such a conception of common responsibility among the departments under his supervision. Only as we are able in the next few months to make his attitude a general one can we expect our share in the national training plan to gain full attention and effectiveness.

—R. W. Whidden,
Denison University.

Casualty

He who rode Pegasus
Now is forlorn;
His mount is extinct
With the unicorn.
Pity poor
Bellerophon.
He has no steed
But Percheron.

—Evelyn Allen Hammett.

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